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State University Ideals:
An Address ... UI Alumni Club,
Chicago, Oct. 28, 1904.

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STATE UNIVERSITY IDEALS

AN ADDRESS

By CHARLES BROCKWAY GIBSON, *President,*
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DELIVERED BEFORE

The University of Illinois Alumni Club,

CHICAGO, OCT. 28, 1904.



EDMUND JAMES JAMES, PH. D., LL.D.
PRESIDENT OF THE UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS, CHAMPAIGN, ILL.

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CHARLES BROCKWAY GIBSON.

Twenty years ago this club was organized on a broad and liberal basis, for the purpose of not only fostering and keeping alive the friendships formed during our school-days, but to aid and promote the growth and welfare of our Alma Mater.

At its organization the spirit which pervaded the club and which was uppermost in the hearts and minds of its members, was that of unity sustained by a firm conviction that in the promulgation of university education, based on modern methods, lay the salvation of the state and the common weal of the republic. To state it more aptly, "The education of the people is the safeguard of the Nation."

I believe we may say without boasting that our efforts have not been in vain, and that our ideas have not clashed materially with the governing powers of the institution, for our sole aim has been to make our Alma Mater what it must and of right ought to be, as great among the universities of the country, as the state is great in wealth and population among the states of the Union.

The State University, by virtue of its origin, is necessarily different in its aim and scope of instruction from the sectarian or privately endowed institution. The Act of 1862, known as the "Land Grant" Act, specially provides that the institutions founded upon it shall be maintained for the education of the children of the people: "In agriculture and the Mechanic Arts, not excluding scientific and classical studies, and including military tactics."

By this act was established in this country the basis of that great democracy of learning and culture, which is in its essence the highest aristocracy.

The idea of establishing institutions of learning where the child of the humblest citizen could better fit himself for the battle of life and the pursuit of happiness,— was indeed something novel in the educational history of the world.

The States first to accept this Grant of Congress and first to build up new institutions, under its provision, were New York and Illinois, but the latter State was the first by a few weeks to open the doors of her infant university to the children of the people of the State.

The great work of the organization of the institution, the breadth of its scope of instruction, the uniting of the practical illustrative work in laboratory, shop and field with the didactic and class-room instruction, was formulated and developed by that able, untiring and broad minded educator, the late Dr. John Milton Gregory, the first president.

The growth and progress of the State University during the past quarter of a century, and particularly during the past decade, proves conclusively the wisdom of the act, the practicability of the idea and the far-seeing wisdom of the man, contemplating the needs and possibilities of this class of educational institutions. Opening in March, 1868, with 72 students and three instructors, the university gradually increased in pupils and instructors until in 1873 there were in attendance about 416 students. From that time to about 1880 the attendance did not noticeably increase, due largely to one of the greatest financial crises the country has ever known. Since that time the attendance has gradually attained to 3,700 in number in all the departments for the present year. At this rate of increase it will be but a short time before there will be 5,000 pupils, and the university *must* be prepared for them.

Dr. Gregory builded better than he knew and to his memory let all honor be paid. The University of Illinois is a greater and more fitting monument to the memory of one of the most advanced and original of America's educators, than mountains of granite or masses of bronze. It is but right that his dreamless

ashes should rest within the shadows of the institution his genius helped to found. This in compliance with his dying request.

What more fitting compliment could be paid to the memory of one who had done so much for the educational interest of the State of his adoption, than that his remains should find sepulcher here.

**"And when at last Death's Angel came,
To summon him away,
And left to us but memories
Around his lifeless clay;
We placed his dreamless dust
Among the shadows of his joy,
Where the blackbird pipes its cheery song
To his 'loved 'Illinois'."**

That both the letter and the spirit of the Act of Congress, and the ideal of Dr. Gregory have been realized and lived up to better in Illinois than in any other State, is evidenced by the University and by the various departments.

The University of Illinois is building up the greatest and best equipped College of Agriculture in the world, under the leadership of an unusually able Dean. It is accredited with having the greatest and most practical College of Engineering in this or any other country. There is one of the most excellent experimental stations for investigation in sanitation and practical bacteriology to be found anywhere. The Natural History and Chemical departments rank with the best in the land in so far as instruction is concerned, and the University is playing not an unimportant part in investigation and research in other branches of science, art, history and letters. Last but not least, we have the best, the most practical and effective military department of any of the Universities founded by this Congressional Act. This, coupled with the Athletic and Gymnastic work, is building up a class of young men who compare favorably in physical development with the trained men of the Army and Navy.

The methods of instruction in this, our University, are such as to best lay the foundation for inspiration and endeavor in those branches of learning which shall fit the young man or young woman for good citizenship in our great State.

These are indeed great results from small beginnings, made frequently under the most adverse circumstances; such as want of adequate funds, lack of facilities for publicity and promotion, the carping and unjust criticism of the public press. But in the face of all this our University has attained to a high rank among the State Universities.

Where in the history of the world's education has there been a parallel of the growth made by our State Universities during the past ten years? This speaks well for the inherent desire of the human mind for higher attainments and a fuller, riper growth.

But it is necessary to make more liberal appropriations than have thus far been made.

It is important that each department be so equipped as to give the greatest output of the highest product of human endeavor, not only in agriculture, mechanics and engineering, but in science, philosophy, literature and art. To this end ample and adequate provisions must be made to encourage original and research work, such as shall add to the world's wealth of knowledge. In the last three score years original research in all lines has added a thousand times more to the world's material welfare than all the cost of such work in dollars and cents. The benefits derived from investigation in chemistry, electricity, physiology, pathology and hygiene are simply incalculable as adding to the world's wealth and in lightening the burdens of human life.

Thus briefly I have endeavored to place before you certain aims and ideals which must be lived up to by the people of our State if they wish to enjoy the perfect fruition of the aims and intent of that wonderful Act of Congress in establishing a great educational system of the people, for the people and by the people.

These aims and ideals have been most admirably set forth in that splendid address delivered last August at the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Wisconsin University, by Dr. C. R. Vax Hise, the new President. I cannot do better than to quote from it:

A state university can only permanently succeed when its doors are open to all of both sexes who possess sufficient intellectual endowment, when the financial terms are so easy that the industrious poor may find the way and when the student sentiment is such that each stands upon an equal footing with all. This is the state university ideal, and this is a new thing in the world.

In the university men are trained to regard economic and social questions as problems to be investigated by the inductive method and in their solutions to aim at what is best for the whole people rather than at what is favorable to the interests with which they chance to be connected.

Such of these men as are filled with a burning enthusiasm for the advancement of the race are capable of great accomplishments, for they possess the enlightenment upon which wise action may be based. Already men who have studied history, economics, political science and sociology in the universities have achieved large results in the formulation and enforcement of the written law and in the growth of a healthy and powerful public sentiment.

Soon such men will be found in every city and hamlet, leading the fight against corruption and mis-rule, but even more important and vastly difficult, leading in constructive advance. In these men lies in a large measure the hope of a peaceful solution of the great questions deeply concerning the nation, some of which are scarcely less momentous than was that of slavery.

The western people were not content with the expansion of pure knowledge; they demanded schools of applied knowledge. Hence the organization of schools of law, medicine, dentistry, etc., subjects which closely concern each individual.

The people of the west even went farther and demanded that language, mathematics, political economy and history be taught so as to best serve the man of affairs.

In recognition of the intellectual power gained in pursuit of applied knowledge and its extreme importance in the development of the nation the state universities of the west have been at least abreast of the eastern institutions.

In Germany, where the universities devote themselves to class work done in the graduate school, the universities are supported by the government. The German statesman regards it as a matter of course, that the production of scholars and investigators at the university is a necessity to the nation and to them is largely due the position Germany has taken during the last half century. In Germany the scholar is a man of affairs. He is found in all important divisions of administration as

adviser and consultant. This condition is beginning to obtain in this country.

The college trained man, and especially the university trained man, is directly or indirectly to control the destinies of the nation in the future. The discoveries at our universities have added vastly more wealth to the states than the entire cost of running the institutions. The advances and improvements made all along the line in chemistry, mechanics and electricity as applied to the arts, manufactures and agriculture during the past decade have added far more to the wealth of the country than the cost of maintaining these various departments.

Out of the discoveries of Franklin and Faraday and those who followed them has come one of the greatest material advances the world has ever known.

The practical man of all practical men is he who, with his face toward the truth, follows wherever it may lead, with no thought but to get a deeper insight into the order of the universe in which he lives.

I therefore hold that the state university which is properly to serve the state must see to it that the scholarship and research of all kinds, whether or not a possible practical value can be pointed out, must be sustained.

The barrenness of America in the creation and appreciation of literature, music and art is the point upon which Europe charges us with semi-barbarism. If the University does not become the center for the cultivation of the highest capabilities of the human mind, where is the work to be done? In America there is no other available agency. This work must be undertaken by the university or remain undone.

If the American people are to cease being mere money-getters, if they are to accomplish more than material advance, if they are to have proportional development, the university must give training in all lines of human endeavor.

There must be linked together the works of letters, science, arts and applied knowledge, together with opportunities of research and original work--this to encourage and stimulate the apt student or the graduate to lines of original research and investigation. To give the faculties the opportunity for directing or in carrying forward such work of themselves is an object and aim that our state universities must attain to in order to ameliorate the lot of mankind by new applications of science to life.

This is the ideal American or state university, and to attain to this ideal must be the work of our people, our graduates and our citizens, until a university is built as broad as human endeavor, as high as human ambition.

Now, gentlemen, the proposition is up to us; it is up to the people of Illinois; it is up to our representatives in the Legislature. Shall the great State of Illinois have a State University which shall have a rank with the other universities of the country, comparable to the rank the State has among the other States of the Union? What shall the answer be?

I believe the sentiment is that we shall be second to none in education and opportunities for advancement as we are second to none in wealth and national importance.

The realization of the aims of our ancestors to found a great, free and independent nation, where the opportunities of all shall be equal, and the rights of all shall be vouchsafed, is a consumation devoutly to be wished.

As eternal vigilance is the price of liberty, so eternal and vigorous efforts along the lines of educational development is the price of intellectual greatness.

Opportunity knocks at the doors of states as well as at those of individuals, and if the call is not heeded, it comes not again. The opportunity is yours,—people of Illinois,—and it must be grasped and its possibilities fully developed. Then and not till then shall we have a commonwealth worthy the name of *great*.



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